

Child and Family Services Update

August 13, 2003

Welcome To The Division Of Child And Family Services!

By Richard Anderson, Director

We have had many new people join with us in the last few months. I have waited until a large group of you were on board and set up in the email system before sending this WELCOME! Recently, I was able to spend four days with some of you in training on the Practice Model. Wow! I was really impressed with this group, which I have been assured represents all of you!

Somewhere in your new employee training you will see or have already seen a video where I talk about the principles of our practice and some of my experiences in the division. You also have a letter from me in your first Practice Model module. I will just add a few words to those given previously. My own work in child welfare and domestic violence has provided me with many years of growth and satisfaction. I believe you have chosen a most meaningful employment path. I think you will find, as I have, that it's much more than just a job!

The studies on why people stay in a human services job show several important components. First, the work has to be important and meaningful. There is no more important work in the world than seeing that children are safe from abuse and neglect and that families can receive the help they need to raise their children in safe and stable homes. Second, being a part of a productive team. You are finding that our Practice Model is based on the work of a child and family team that includes informal supports to the family and professionals that can fill the gaps with needed services. Third, is being entrusted with much responsibility. I am assuming that you now realize the responsibility that you have is great. This sense of responsibility should always stay with you, but don't let it overwhelm you. As you access the supports you have within the division and in the community and work with the team, you will find that the responsibility is a shared responsibility. Fourth, is receiving recognition. This is always somewhat confusing for child welfare professionals. There are many sides to a story and many opinions about our work. As I stated to the group I met with in the Practice Model training, your ethics and your skills will determine the recognition you receive and the confidence you will have in this work. The last items are those of achievement, personal growth, and advancement. You will find successes with the children and families you serve that will provide a great sense of achievement. It has been my experience that the work you do with children and families will also provide many opportunities for personal growth, as you will learn much from them, as well as from your ongoing professional training. (As I mentioned to the group when I attended the Practice Model training, "If you find yourself reading a book about this work or a professional journal article on your own time, this just might be a sign that you are a real professional.") Advancement will come as you apply yourself to the work through skills development and regular application of those skills, as you effectively participate as a team member, as you remain open to new ideas, and as you stay true to the mission of the division to protect children and empower families.

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We are asking you to keep your region director posted on your progress through a monthly email to them for the first several months. I am always open to correspondence with you, as well. Your supervisor will be the most important person in your support system. Develop good communications with your supervisor. We want you to have success. We are happy you came to the division. Be the best child welfare and domestic violence professional that you can be. I'm sure the rewards will come to you in your life and work as they have to me in mine. You have all my hope, support, and best wishes for your success.